

## Friction and Inconsistency.

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zealots remained with Luther, but the extremely subjective element, to which he had given encouragement in his battle with Antichrist, was by no means finally repulsed when Storch and his fellow-fanatics were driven once more into exile. Carlstadt and Miinzer became the prophets of the common man; Luther ceased to be the popular leader. It would be unfair to call him a politician ; compared with Carlstadt, he is rather a moderate. " The middle course," cried he in one of his sermons, " is the best." But to preserve moderation in such an age, with the revolutionary fever spreading like an epidemic far and near, was as difficult a task as to overthrow Antichrist, and it is difficult not to see sometimes the politician in the moderate. To condemn the mass, and yet permit the mass ; to preach the crusade against the Church, and yet condone some of its superstitious practices ; to appeal to the Bible against his enemies, and yet thunder anathemas against any one who quoted Scripture against himself; to preach submission to the powers that be, and yet denounce them in his angry moods as fools and tyrants, was not an easy *role* to play. Nor was he altogether consistent in his denunciation of the individualism of the prophets. Miinzer, in emphasising the subjective element in religion, was only accentuating Luther's own principle. "It belongs," insisted the reformer, " to each and every Christian to know and to judge of doctrine, and belongs in such wise that he is anathema who shall have diminished this right by a hairbreadth."

Such a temporiser was not, after all, the prophet whose advent the astrologers and the wandering preachers had been foretelling to the peasants for well-nigh a century. Andreas von Bodenstein, a native of Carlstadt, better known as Dr Carlstadt, seemed a more likely Messiah, now that he had broken utterly with Luther, had retired from Wittenberg, and even donned the peasant's blouse for a time in a neighbouring village, had discarded the non-Christian degree of doctor, and was preaching his radical gospel, based on personal inspiration as well as the Bible, at Orlamunde. From Orlamunde, Luther, who attempted to intervene a second time, was driven with hisses and curses. " Begone in the name of a thousand devils," was the parting blessing of the Orlamundites, " and